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SIPDIS

FROM U.S. MISSION IN ROME

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SUBJECT: WFP EMERGENCY APPEAL FOR KENYA

1. Summary. WFP is soliciting contributions for its new emergency operation (EMOP), "Food Assistance to Drought-affected People in Kenya," covering the period from August 1, 2004 through January 31, 2005. The estimated cost of \$42.9 million would provide 166,000 metric tons of commodities for 2.3 million beneficiaries. In addition to a drought that is causing maize shortages, Kenya is contending with outbreaks of aflatoxin, a naturally occurring mycotoxin found in drought-stricken grains, and potential complications surrounding its policies on genetically modified food. End summary.

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Drought-induced Maize Shortages  
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2. WFP's emergency appeal is largely attributable to the failure of the "short rains" from October through December 2003 and the erratic "long rains" from March through May 2004. In most of the Coast and Eastern provinces, approximately 80 to 95 percent of the maize crop has wilted completely. June 2004 maize prices were 50 to 80 percent higher than the average during the last drought from 1999 through 2002. On July 14, 2004, President Kibaki declared a national emergency and appealed for international assistance.

3. WFP's emergency appeal is being coordinated closely with the GOK. During the period from January to June 2004, the GOK has provided a total of 31,134 MT of commodities to drought-affected populations. The magnitude of the current emergency means that GOK resources are insufficient by themselves to meet relief needs. Accordingly, with WFP, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MOEST) will coordinate food distribution and carry out monitoring and reporting of the school feeding programs. Note: GOK was very concerned about the reduction in US McGovern-Dole funding, but fortunately, additional donors have been identified. End note.

4. A short rains assessment will be conducted in December 2004 to determine whether continued emergency relief assistance is necessary. Following the assessment, WFP will reduce rations in some areas, general food distribution will be shifted to food-for-work, and other areas phased out under the EMOP altogether.

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Recent Aflatoxin Outbreaks  
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5. As of June 22, 2004, 275 cases and 112 deaths have occurred from resumed aflatoxin poisoning and contaminated maize in Kenya's Eastern and Central Provinces, according to a joint report issued by the Kenya Ministry of Health, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, US Foreign Agricultural Service, and US Food and Drug Administration on July 5, 2004.

6. Earlier preliminary data in June and early July led field team representatives to conduct a survey of maize products from agricultural markets and outlets affected by aflatoxin.

7. Survey results indicate that there is widespread aflatoxin contamination of maize distributed and sold in both Machakos and Thika Districts. In the

Makuni District 65 percent of the samples had levels of aflatoxin above 20 parts per billion, the upper limit accepted under Kenyan standards.

18. According to the joint report, further studies will be necessary to determine the source of contaminated maize. In addition, without immediate replacement of available maize with clean food, the

aflatoxin outbreak, one of the largest ever reported in the world, is expected to continue. The logistic capacity to deal with the provision of maize and destruction of current stock is not in place.

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Potential Complications Over Biotech Food  
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19. USUN Rome has been informed by WFP that, although the official position of the GOK is negative regarding biotech food, WFP has been assured by highly placed representatives of the GOK that no questions will be raised on food aid imported for the emergency drought operation.

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Comments from Ambassador Hall  
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10. WFP's emergency appeal deserves serious consideration. We welcome the cooperation between WFP and the GOK, particularly in these times when Kenya faces serious food-related difficulties. Temporary emergency food aid can help stabilize the lives and livelihoods of 2.3 million of Kenya's most vulnerable people. Hall

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